

UNTOLD

STORY LEADS FROM MONTANA



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Pigs Fly at Bear Creek Downs

An announcer makes the introductions, a trumpet sounds, a bell rings and they're off! And as at many other racetracks throughout the country, from under the silks comes the sound of pounding hoofs!

Now, if you notice that the runners are short and porcine as opposed to lean and thoroughbred-like, you know you are at the Bear Creek Saloon, home to the state's only pig races. The tiny town of Bearcreek, seven miles east of Red Lodge, has hosted this event since 1989. During the season, every weekend from around Memorial Day through Labor Day, the betting windows at the Downs open at 7 p.m. for the 12 nightly races featuring such stars as Makin' Bacon, Knuckles and Nota Hot Dog.

"The pig races are just plain fun family entertainment."

The winning pig pays out one-half of each approximately \$50 race pot. The other half goes toward scholarships



The pig races in Bearcreek, Montana.

for Carbon County high school students. Since Bear Creek Saloon owners Bob "Pits" and Lynn DeArmond began the races to offset a slow tourist season during the 1988 Yellowstone fires, more than \$53,000 has been raised for scholarships.

"The pig races are just plain fun family entertainment," says Lynn DeArmond. "Everyone from small children to grandparents have a good time here plus they have a sense of pride when they learn about the scholarship fund."

A white wire fence borders the mini oval stadium complete with ads

on the walls, which is located outside the back of the restaurant. From a balcony fans witness the moves of their favorite pig. These pigs can fly! How? Drop by the races, stay awhile and learn the secret.

And, to satisfy that human urge to eat, bite into a variety of 100% Montana beef steaks or opt for Cajun shrimp and grilled chicken. Looking for a pork chop? Don't even go there. These 20-to 90-pound racers are well cared for and adored! Ready to pig out? Give the Bear Creek Saloon a call at (406) 446-3481.

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You might say that the tiny town of Ekalaka, situated on the plains in far southeastern Montana, is a little backwards. Well, on at least one weekend of the year, Ekalaka residents step back in time with the annual Medicine Rocks Black Powder Shoot.

This year's event is set for September 7-8. Contestants armed with muzzleloaders, lever-action Winchesters and long-range Sharps rifles try to nail steel silhouette targets of geese, prairie dogs, coyotes, bears, buffalo and even an outlaw.

The Medicine Rocks shoot was created in 1999 to promote the sport of black powder shooting and to educate the public on the historical dress, customs and lifestyles of the 1840-1900 period on the high plains.

"We strongly encourage the shooters and the spectators to dress in 1840-1900 period



Black powder shoot event in Montana.

clothing to add to the fun, but it's not mandatory," says Warren White, the event organizer.

The shoot attracts people from all walks of life. Men and women, professionals and blue-collar workers gather for the two-day festivities. The one common denominator for of the contestants is their love of history.

Another interesting fact here in Ekalaka is that the men and women compete shoulder to shoulder in all of the events. At last year's competition there was a first place shoot off between a man and woman. "It was hysterical because it was husband versus a wife," explains Shirley Wood, Warren's wife. "The husband won, but a bunch of us thought the wife lost on purpose so she would have some peace after the event,"

says Shirley with a laugh.

Step back in time this September with a trip to the Medicine Rocks Black Powder Shoot. Call Warren or Shirley Wood at (406) 775-6294 for more details. Or for other black powder events across the state, check out the events calendar on www.visitimt.com.

Nuts to You



Mae Lawrence, owner of Matt's Place in Butte.

Butte, Montana's history is steeped in a rich mining tradition. Another Butte tradition that has mined riches for its customers through the years is Matt's Place.

Matt's, Montana's first and oldest drive-in (73 years old,) is owned and operated by Mae Lawrence. Mae and her husband, Louis, bought Matt's Place from Matt Korne in 1943. Louis passed away in 1962, but with the help of 19 family members, Mae has continued to run Matt's, churning out homemade ice cream and peeling "lots of potatoes" for homemade french fries.

Matt's Place is located in an unassuming two-story white house, with the upstairs serving as Mae's home. Downstairs 16 chrome stools with brown leather seats welcome those lucky enough to find inside seating during lunch, while carhops still provide curbside service. Mae is most proud of the fact that "she has helped family and they have helped her." Several family members have put themselves through college on the money made working at Matt's. Mae won't divulge her age, claiming that "people think I'm insane working at my age, but I'm a people person. I really enjoy seeing all the generations of people that have come here."

Matt's is definitely the place to imbibe in an old-fashioned shake, still served from a metal container and yielding two glasses of thick, sinful goo for \$2.80. It's a near perfect accompaniment for the "nutburger" (ground round topped with a nuts and mayo mixture) for \$3.40.

Matt's is one of a handful of vintage drive-ins found in Montana. Others worth noting include Kings Hat (Billings); Ford's (Great Falls), complete with carhops; Hoagieville (Missoula); R-B Drive In (Helena), with phosphates on tap; and Mark's In & Out (Livingston) with killer onion rings, according to the locals.

Riding the Rails

It was all downhill for 20,000 bicyclists who pedaled the 15-mile "Route of the Hiawatha" mountain bike trail last summer. Located off Interstate 90 on the Montana/Idaho border, the Route of the Hiawatha is a portion of the defunct Milwaukee Railroad line. This stretch of the abandoned rail bed was transformed into this scenic ride in 1998.

Because the trail is built on a railroad bed, the average slope is a gentle 2% grade. Cyclists can coast the entire trail downhill, and then have the option of cycling back uphill to the starting point, or jumping onto a shuttle, which transports them back to the start.

"That's what's so great about this trail," says Phil Edholm, president of the Lookout Ski Association, the operator of the trail. "Bikers from 80 years old to young children can all enjoy it."

Bicyclists wind through the Bitterroot Mountains and some of the most beautiful scenery in the northern Rockies. Deer, elk and moose abound here in this lush wilderness. Along the way, the trail crosses seven high trestles and makes its way through nine tunnels, the longest of which is the 1.7-mile-long Taft



photos by Matthew Cohn

A rider on one of trestles looking west (towards Montana)

Tunnel. It's all part of the adventure: Cyclists must wear headlamps on their helmets to find their way through the cool and dark tunnels.

According to Edholm, this route is not only a bike trail, but also a history lesson. Last summer the Forest Service added interpretive signage along the trek so bicyclists can stop and learn about the rich history of the impressive Milwaukee Railroad line.

When completed, the Route of the Hiawatha will extend a total of 43 miles from Pearson, Idaho to St. Regis, Montana. The trail operates from late May through early October. For more details log onto www.skilookout.com.

Picture This

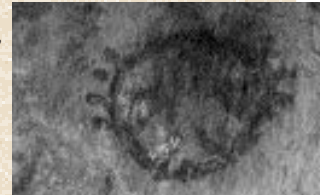
If a picture paints a thousand words, then you'll discover hundreds of ancient stories when you visit the Bear Gulch Pictographs, 23 miles southeast of Lewistown.

Macie Lundin knows a lot about Bear Gulch; she grew up and still lives on the pictograph site. According to Macie, people have been dropping by to see the pictographs for more than 80 years, since the days her grandfather homesteaded the land. But last year, Macie decided to turn these drop-ins, into a family business.



"Last summer we had 700 people visit the site at all times of the day," explains Macie. "This summer there will be one tour a day, weather permitting, from May through November at 10:00 in the morning. That's because the light is best at that time."

Among the 2,000 pictographs (paintings) and petroglyphs (etchings), you'll see figures of warriors holding shields and clubs, and ochre-red elk and bison, along with other designs drawn by Native Americans depicting scenes from their lives.



"This pictograph site is very rare. It's something few people have on their land, so it's very important to me to save, document and preserve it," says Macie. "I see the site as an educational tool for families and children."

If you would like to extend your stay at Bear Gulch, consider a working vacation. In exchange for helping build trails, picnic and campground sites and a visitor center, Macie will provide two meals a day, sleeping quarters and plenty of talk around the table.

Picture yourself in Montana this summer. For more information on the Bear Gulch Pictographs log onto www.beargulch.net, or check out Travel Montana's website www.visitmt.com for other interesting archeological sites to explore throughout the state.

Down and Dirty in Eastern Montana

Driving along U.S. Highway 2 in northeastern Montana, you may not think about the town of Scobey until you see the beckoning sign: "Visit Pioneer Town. Open all summer. Scobey,



Montana. 40 minutes North on Highway 13."

"Scobey is 50 miles from the main highway; it is not a place you go through, it is a destination," says Edgar Richardson, president of the Daniels County Museum.

Scobey's Pioneer Town museum takes visitors back to small-town life in the early 1900s. A furnished blacksmith shop, schoolhouse, general store, dress shop, bank, saloon, theater, and doctor's office look "like the people just stepped out for lunch," explains Edgar.

The highlight of the year in Scobey is the annual Pioneer Days held on the last week-

end of June. This year's event is scheduled for June 28-30. "Pioneer Days is really a social event. People come to visit, hold class reunions and even get married," explains

Edgar. Events include a parade featuring old tractors and cars, old-fashioned kids games and a "thresherman's breakfast."

So, what's on tap for entertainment? The Dirty Shame Show and Dirty Shame Belles, that's what! The variety show features skits, comedy, dancing, music and singing. The stars of the show, the Dirty Shame Belles chorus line and the Dixieland Band, draw people from all over.

Now aren't you glad you headed north to Scobey? For more information call the Daniels County Chamber of Commerce at (406) 487-2061 or visit www.scobey.org

JUNE

- 1-2 **Frontier Days**—Culbertson 787-5821
- 1-2 **Mission Mountain Testicle Festival**—Charlo 644-2392
- 1-3 **Bigfork Whitewater Festival**—Bigfork 837-5888
- 2 **Country Fair at the Moss Mansion**—Billings 256-5100
- 2 **Governor's Cup (road race)**—Helena 447-3414
- 2 **Richey Vintage Car Show**—Richey 773-5840
- 2-3 **Missouri River Breaks Lewis & Clark Encampment**—Malta 673-3559 or 673-3796
- 2-3 **Powder River Buffalo Shoot**—Broadus 427-5255 or 436-2585
- 8-10 **Hot Springs 52nd Homesteader Days Celebration**—Hot Springs 741-2361
- 8-10 **Montana Mule Days**—Drummond 777-5988 or 777-2331
- 9 **Buzzard Day**—Glendive 365-6256
- 9 **Gold Rush Fever Day**—Virginia City 843-5555
- 9-10 **Pioneer Power Day Threshing Bee**—Lewistown 538-5236
- 9-10 **Rock Creek Walleye Tournament on Fort Peck**—Glasgow 653-1952
- 9-17 **Red Lodge Music Festival**—Red Lodge 446-1905
- 14-17 **Fort Union Rendezvous**—Sidney 701-572-9083
- 14-17 **Red Bottom Celebration**—Frazier 768-5155 ext. 338 or 695-2272
- 15-17 **Montana Reenactment 2001**—Pompeys Pillar 585-8459 or 580-2200
- 15-17 **Sleeping Giant Swing'n Jazz Jubilee**—Helena 227-9711 or 227-6961
- 16 **Heritage Day**—Sidney 482-1916
- 16 **Powell County Territorial Day**—Deer Lodge 846-2094
- 17 **49th Roy Rodeo**—Roy 464-2296
- 20-21 **1876 Grand Ball**—Hardin 665-2559 or 665-1671
- 20-24 **Lewis & Clark Festival: "Unexpected Discoveries"**—Great Falls 452-5661
- 20-24 **Little Bighorn Days**—Hardin 665-1672
- 22-23 **Badlands Drifters Car Club 12th Annual "Cars in the Park" Show**—Glendive 365-5342 or 365-2753
- 22-24 **125th Anniversary of the Custer Battle at Little Big Horn**—Garryowen 638-1876 or 638-2000
- 22-24 **Breakout Bluegrass Campout**—Garrison 846-1843
- 22-24 **Custer's Last Stand Reenactment**—Hardin 665-3577 or 665-1672
- 23 **Longest Dam Run**—Glasgow 228-2222
- 24 **Augusta American Legion Rodeo and Parade**—Augusta 562-3477
- 24 **Dale Tash Montana History Day**—Bannack 834-3413
- 28-7/1 **Montana Traditional Dixieland Jazz Festival**—Missoula 771-1642
- 29-7/1 **Fort Benton Summer Celebration**—Fort Benton 622-3351 or 622-5166
- 30 **33rd Annual Beartooth Run**—Red Lodge 446-1718
- 30-7/1 **Pioneer Days and Antique Show**—Scobey 487-5965 or 487-2061

JULY

For a list of all Montana's rodeos, pow wows, fairs and events, log on to visitmt.com

- 6-8 **Hellgate Rendezvous Art and Craft Show**—Kalispell 538-2212
- 6-8 **Outlaw Days**—Malta 654-1776
- 6-8 **Rock'n Roll Daze**—Missoula 251-6617 or 949-5016
- 7-8 **Annual Arts Festival**—Whitefish 863-9887
- 12-14 **Montana Governor's Cup Walleye Tournament**—Glasgow 228-2222
- 12-15 **North American Indian Days**—Browning 338-7276
- 13-14 **Chief Victor Days**—Victor 363-2400
- 13-14 **Marcus Daly Days**—Hamilton 363-5480
- 13-15 **78th Annual Wolf Point Wild Horse Stampede**—Wolf Point 653-2220
- 13-15 **Bitterroot Valley Bluegrass Festival**—Hamilton 363-4444
- 13-15 **Western Heritage Days**—Deer Lodge 846-2070 or 846-3388
- 17-26 **Clark Bottom Rendezvous**—Laurel 633-2497
- 19-22 **Fairview Old Timers Reunion and Summer Festival**—Fairview 744-5189
- 20-21 **Montana State Old Time Fiddlers Contest**—Polson 323-1198
- 20-22 **Art in Washoe Park**—Anaconda 563-2422
- 20-22 **Wahcinca Dakota Oyate Celebration**—Poplar 768-5186 or 768-5155 ext. 352
- 21 **Jim Bridger Days**—Bridger 662-3305 or 662-3222
- 21 **Railroad Days**—Alberton 722-4570
- 21-22 **Bannack Days**—Bannack 834-3413
- 21-22 **Canyon Ferry Walleye Festival**—Townsend 266-5279
- 21-22 **Live History Day**—Polson 883-6804
- 21-29 **Wild West Heritage Week**—Virginia City and Ennis 843-5364 or 843-5555
- 21-30 **Skydive Lost Prairie 34th Annual Jump Meet**—Kalispell 858-2493
- 25-30 **International Traditional Games**—Evaro 675-0160
- 26-29 **21st Annual Sweet Grass County Cutting Competition**—Big Timber 932-5750
- 26-29 **Lewis & Clark Festival**—Cut Bank 873-4041 or 873-2213
- 27-29 **Bitterroot Valley All Nations Pow Wow**—Hamilton 363-5383 or 726-3701
- 27-29 **Butte Jazz Festival**—Butte 782-2069
- 27-29 **Hockaday Museum of the Arts in the Park**—Kalispell 755-5268
- 27-8/5 **Red Lodge Mountain Man Rendezvous**—Red Lodge 446-1718
- 28-29 **Clark Day**—Billings 896-5235
- 28-8/4 **Montana State Fair**—Great Falls 727-8900

AUGUST

- 2-5 **Phillips County Fair**—Malta 654-7037
- 2-5 **Two Rivers Rendezvous**—Libby 293-7251
- 3-5 **Huckleberry Days**—Whitefish 862-3501
- 3-5 **Rocky Mountain Accordian Celebration**—Philipsburg 859-3388 or 859-3236
- 3-5 **Sweet Pea Festival**—Bozeman 586-4003

- 3-5 **The Virginia City Gathering**—Virginia City 843-5455
- 3-12 **Festival of Nations**—Red Lodge 446-1718 or 446-4960
- 4 **Chief Plenty Coups Day of Honor**—Pryor 252-1289
- 4-5 **Annual Festival of the Arts**—Bigfork 881-4636 or 837-5888
- 9-11 **Chokecherry Festival**—Broadus 436-2778 or 436-2288
- 9-11 **International Fly Fishing Show**—Livingston 585-7592
- 10-12 **Carter County Quilt Show**—Ekalaka 775-6294 or 775-6886
- 11 **123rd Commemoration of the Battle of the Big Hole**—Wisdom 689-3155
- 11 **High Plains Classic Car Show**—Miles City 232-3288 or 232-4479
- 11-18 **MontanaFair, Metrapark**—Billings 256-2400 or 256-2422
- 13-19 **Burnt Hole Rendezvous/Historical Reenactment**—West Yellowstone 646-7110
- 16-19 **Montana Cowboy Poetry Gathering**—Lewistown 538-8278
- 16-19 **Western Rendezvous of Art**—Helena 442-4263 or 442-3256
- 16-20 **Crow Fair and Rodeo**—Crow Agency 638-2601 ext. 104 or 222
- 18-19 **Threshing Bee**—Huntley 967-6687 or 698-7807
- 23-26 **Eastern Montana Fair**—Miles City 232-9554
- 24-26 **Barnes Steam and Power Show**—Belgrade 388-4433
- 25-26 **Montana Walleye Unlimited Fall Classic**—Lewistown 464-5491
- 25-26 **Victorian Weekend & Heritage Days**—Virginia City 843-5300 or 843-5555
- 26 **Mining Heritage Days**—Butte 723-7211
- 31-9/3 **Milk River Wagon Train**—Malta 654-1100 or 654-2783

For a complete list of events, see us at visitmt.com

FROM MONTANA

The diversity of events, places and people in Montana is almost as wide as the state itself. We hope to give you a taste of that diversity with this quarterly newsletter. In addition, my office offers these services to editors, writers and producers.

Visual Materials

Color slides, 8"x10" B/W photos and stock video footage are available for editorial use.

Writer/Photographer Referrals

We can put you in contact with many of Montana's most talented and experienced freelance writers and photographers.

Editorial Copy/Calendar of Events

We can provide background information or editorial copy for many subjects. We also maintain a calendar of events for the entire state.

Individual Attention

If you need the latest vacation guide and road map of Montana, a liaison with other government agencies or detailed information to fit a specific story angle, we're here to assist you.

Mary Boyle, Publicity Coordinator